

**The sixth production of A Noise Within's 2018-2019 Season: LET ME IN
Presented by the S. Mark Taper Foundation**

The Glass Menagerie

**By Tennessee Williams
Directed by Geoff Elliott
Feb. 24 - April 26, 2019**

(Press Opening Night - March 2)

Pasadena, Calif. (Feb. 7, 2019) - A Noise Within (ANW), California's acclaimed classic repertory theatre, is proud to present the play that made Tennessee Williams a household name, *The Glass Menagerie*. ANW Producing Artistic Director **Geoff Elliott** will direct the great American play that made its debut in Chicago in 1944 and a year later earned Williams the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award when it moved to Broadway. *The Glass Menagerie* performs from Feb. 24 through April 26. Previews begin Feb. 24 and **press opening night is March 2**.

In *The Glass Menagerie*, an innocuous visit from a potential suitor unsettles the sheltered Wingfield family. Matriarch Amanda fiercely protects her adult children from the harshness of others, but doesn't realize that her own eccentricities are the biggest threat to their psychological survival. Brimming with poetic language and indelible characters, this play about the enduring but limiting nature of love and family is an autobiographical account of Williams' life growing up in St. Louis, Mo.

"*The Glass Menagerie's* poetic nature, its humor, and its heartbreak make it one of my favorite plays, and certainly my favorite Tennessee Williams play," said Geoff Elliott. "The autobiographical nature of the story and its alignment to Williams' own life are fascinating to me. I have for several years been passionate about re-discovering the play more from a director's perspective than from the viewpoint of an actor in the cast as I played Tom Wingfield in our previous production."

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The Glass Menagerie was first produced by A Noise Within during its 1997-98 season with Julia Rodriguez-Elliott directing, Geoff Elliott narrating as Tom Wingfield, and Deborah Strang as the authoritative and stubborn matriarch Amanda Wingfield.

Four of ANW's Resident Artists have been selected as part of the intimate cast of the 2019 production with **Deborah Strang** returning as Amanda Wingfield, **Rafael Goldstein** as Tom Wingfield, who is also the narrator of the play from whose memory the story is recalled, **Erika Soto** as Laura Wingfield, and **Kasey Mahaffy** as the gentleman caller, Jim O'Connor.

Geoff Elliott said, "As importantly, I want to share Deborah's Amanda with audiences. She was wonderful 20 years ago, but probably too young. She is now the perfect age and her sensibilities as an artist and the life experience she has gained will combine to give our audiences a very special performance in this key role. Also, the other three actors in the production are three of my favorite performers in the world, so thus far it has been a joyful experience."

Elliott continued, "I believe this production will have a sharper focus on the aftermath of such a difficult family dynamic. I am interested in where the family members end up and why. I believe a possible answer to that mystery will be more present in this production."

Even though the times have drastically changed since the late 1930s setting of *The Glass Menagerie*, Elliott still believes there is a lot to take away about human relationships from the classic Williams play.

"I believe audiences will experience a deep sense of empathy for the courage, humor, and resolve that the Wingfields demonstrate in their attempt to support one another," noted Elliott. "Their foibles and missteps are also so very human that I believe every member of the audience will see themselves in aspects of these complicated and conflicted people. It is a play that will stay with you long after you have exited the theatre."

This powerful play connects deeply with the theme of ANW's 2018-19 repertory season, "Let Me In," which highlights the stories of characters who are considered outcasts.

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“This is a family clinging to the edges of society. They are true outsiders, struggling to survive and thrive in a world that seems to have forgotten them, a world that seems to play by different rules. Societal pressures are so great that even a deep bond of love is not enough to keep the Wingfields from flying apart. As is often the case, there is no societal safety net to help snatch them from the brink of disaster,” explained Elliott.

Tickets for *The Glass Menagerie* start at \$25 and are available at anoisewithin.org, by phone at 626-356-3121, and at the box office located at 3352 East Foothill Blvd. in Pasadena, Calif.

Calendar Listing

The Glass Menagerie

by Tennessee Williams

Directed by Geoff Elliott

at A Noise Within, 3352 E. Foothill Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91107

The Cast and Creative Team

The cast includes (*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States)

Amanda Wingfield: Deborah Strang*

Tom Wingfield: Rafael Goldstein*

Laura Wingfield: Erika Soto*

Jim O'Connor: Kasey Mahaffy*

Amanda Wingfield (u/s): Jane Macfie*

Tom Wingfield (u/s): Ty Mayberry*

Laura Wingfield: Roshni Shukla*

Jim O'Connor (u/s): Tavis Doucette*

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Geoff Elliott will direct. The scenic design is by **Fred Kinney**; costume design by **Jenny Foldenauer**; lighting design by **Ken Booth**; original music / sound design by **Robert Oriol**; projection design by **Kristin Campbell**; costume assistant is **Alycia Matz**; wig/make-up design by **Shannon Hutchins**; props master is **Sydney Russell**; dialect coach is **Nike Doukas**.

Sponsors

ANW's 2018-19 Season is presented by the **S. Mark Taper Foundation**.

Lead Sponsor: **James and Trevesa Terrile**

Media Sponsor: **KCET Media**

The Glass Menagerie is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

Performances

Sunday, Feb. 24 at 2 p.m. (Preview)

Wednesday, Feb. 27 at 7:30 p.m. (Preview and Symposium)

Thursday, Feb. 28 at 7:30 p.m. (Preview and Pay What You Can)

Friday, March 1 at 8 p.m. (Preview)

Saturday, March 2 at 8 p.m. (Opening)

Sunday, March 3 at 2 p.m.

Sunday, March 10 at 2 p.m. (Post-Show Conversation)

Sunday, March 10 at 7 p.m. (Sunday Rush)

Saturday, March 30 at 2 p.m.

Saturday, March 30 at 8 p.m.

Thursday, April 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 5 at 8 p.m. (Post-Show Conversation)

Sunday, April 14 at 2 p.m.

Sunday, April 14 at 7 p.m. (Sunday Rush)

Saturday, April 20 at 2 p.m.

Saturday, April 20 at 8 p.m.

Thursday, April 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 26 at 8 p.m. (Post-Show Conversation)

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Ticket and Price Information

Buy Online: www.anoisewithin.org **Buy Via Phone:** 626-356-3121

Purchase at Box Office: 3352 E. Foothill Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107

Regular Prices: Single tickets from \$25, Student Rush with ID an hour before performance \$20.

Pay What You Can (PWYC): Thursday, Feb. 28 at 7:30 p.m. – all tickets remaining are *Pay What You Can*, cash only, exact change appreciated, at the box office on day of performance after 2 p.m. Limit two per person. Suggested price of \$10.

Sunday Rush: March 10 and April 14 at 7 p.m. – all tickets remaining are \$25, available online after 12 a.m. day of performance with the code **SUNDAYRUSH** or at the box office, cash or credit, after 2 p.m. day of performance.

Groups (10 or more): Adults from \$25 to \$50 a ticket, up to 35% off; Students from \$18/tickets. Call 626-356-3121 for more information and ask for Subscriber Services Manager Deborah Strang.

Symposium and Post-Show Conversations

This run of *The Glass Menagerie* includes a symposium with theatre scholar and Pepperdine University Divisional Dean of Fine Arts, **Dr. Bradley Griffin**, at 6:45 p.m. on Feb. 27, 2019 and post-show conversations on March 10, April 5 and April 26, 2019.

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ANW's 2018-2019 Season - Let Me In

“All of our 2018-19 offerings feature characters who are outliers – people who have blazed their own trail but nevertheless struggle for acknowledgement and acceptance,” says Geoff Elliott. “**Let Me In** isn’t about a physical space, it’s about the deeply human passion to be understood for who we are.”

Tennessee Williams’ haunting memory play, *The Glass Menagerie* (directed by Geoff Elliott; Feb. 24 to April 26), will run in rotating repertory with William Shakespeare’s story of love and betrayal, *Othello* (directed by Jessica Kubzansky; Feb. 10 – April 28, 2019), and Mary Zimmerman’s retelling of the classic Greek myth of *The Voyage of Jason and the Argonauts* in *Argonautika* (directed by Julia Rodriguez-Elliott; March 20 – May 5, 2019). Following the spring 2019 repertory season, the popular and acclaimed ANW production of *Noises Off* (directed by Julia Rodriguez-Elliott & Geoff Elliott; May 21 – June 9, 2019) returns. **KCET** is a media sponsor for A Noise Within’s 2018-19 Season. A Noise Within’s repertory theatre season is presented by the **S. Mark Taper Foundation**.

Julia Rodriguez-Elliott says, “Whether they’re in self-exile (*The Glass Menagerie*), or shunned (*Othello*), or led astray by hedonistic desires (*A Picture of Dorian Gray*), or thrust there by the fickle cruelty of fate (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*) or the gods (*Argonautika*), all of these characters on the margins of society are fascinating and deeply resonant with anyone who has ever felt left out.”

About the Play

Since its Chicago premiere in 1944, Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* has captivated audiences. Williams’ work examines the struggle individuals encounter when their hopes and their reality are in conflict. Tom Wingfield’s dream for an adventurous, if dangerous, life spurs his increasing frustration with his mundane work at the shoe warehouse. Matriarch Amanda Wingfield’s expectation that her daughter Laura finds a husband and that Tom supports the family is complicated by Laura’s crippling social anxieties and Tom’s desire to find adventure. Laura’s

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desire to fit in is hindered by her extreme shyness and isolation. The tragedy of the play lives in this clash of expectations and reality. This largely autobiographical play was a hit among theatregoers and transferred to New York in March of 1945 where it earned the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award. The success of *The Glass Menagerie* launched Tennessee Williams into stardom.

About the Playwright

Tennessee Williams was born on May 26, 1911 as Thomas Lanier Williams in Columbus, Mississippi. He was the second of three children born to Cornelius and Edwina Williams. Cornelius Williams was a travelling salesman whose work often kept him away from home. As a result, Williams was predominantly raised by his mother, who was the daughter of a strict minister and exemplified many aspects of a typical Southern Belle. Williams later described his childhood in Mississippi as a happy and carefree time.

Williams and his family moved to Missouri when Cornelius Williams was offered an executive position at the International Shoe Company based in St. Louis. This move was difficult for Williams—life in St. Louis, as an urban city, differed greatly from life in Columbus, Mississippi. In addition to the geographical relocation, the fights between Williams' parents intensified and became more frequent in St. Louis. Many arguments centered on the facts that Cornelius felt too tied down by his family and considered Edwina to be overly protective and attached to their children.

It was shortly after this move to St. Louis that Williams began to use writing as a coping mechanism for the change—"because I found life unsatisfactory," he later said.

In 1929, Williams began to study journalism at the University of Missouri in Columbia. While he was there, he began to write plays. The University of Missouri Dramatic Arts Club hosted an annual Dramatic Plays Prize contest. Williams' first plays *Beauty is the Word* and *Hot Milk at Three in the Morning* both received honorable mentions in the contest. After attending the University of

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Missouri for three years, Williams' father insisted he leave school and work at the shoe factory where he worked to help provide for the family. Williams worked at the factory for two years before returning to his studies, this time at Washington University in St. Louis. After some time there, Williams transferred to the University of Iowa, where he finally earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1938.

It was after graduating that Williams first began to publish his writing under the name Tennessee. From 1938 until 1944, Williams spent considerable time travelling throughout the country as he wrote. One of his travels took him to New Orleans, a place that later served as inspiration for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. It was also during this time that Williams began to discover his homosexuality.

In December 1944, Williams' play, *The Glass Menagerie* opened in Chicago, and the burgeoning playwright's life changed. *The Glass Menagerie* was a hit and transferred to New York in March of 1945 where it earned the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award. The success of the play launched Tennessee Williams into stardom. Two years later, Williams' next play *A Streetcar Named Desire* opened in New York to great success. Williams won both the Drama Critic's Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *A Streetcar Named Desire* and established himself as a major playwright.

Over the next fifteen years, Williams won numerous awards for his work, including the Tony Award® for Best Play for *The Rose Tattoo*, the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award for both *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Night of the Iguana*, and the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

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PRESS RELEASE

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About A Noise Within

A Noise Within has been called “an oasis for those who love classic stories” by *Los Angeles Times* and is a leading regional producer based in Pasadena, Calif. ANW’s award-winning resident company practices a rotating repertory model at their state-of-the-art, 283-seat performance space. This venue, established in 2011, has allowed ANW to expand its audience, surpassing its previous box office, subscription, and attendance records year after year.

In addition to producing world-class performances of classical theatre, the organization runs robust education programs committed to inspiring diverse audiences of all ages. Helmed by Producing Artistic Directors **Geoff Elliott** and **Julia Rodriguez-Elliott**, who hold MFAs from San Francisco’s renowned American Conservatory Theatre (A.C.T.), A Noise Within truly delivers **CLASSIC THEATRE, MODERN MAGIC**. <http://www.anoisewithin.org>

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